

Multilingual Communication in a Higher Education Classroom in Namibia where the dominant community language is Oshiwambo

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DECLARATION

I, the undersigned, hereby declare that the work contained in this thesis is my own original work and has not previously in its entirety or in part been submitted at any university for a degree. I further declare that all sources cited or otherwise referred to, are acknowledged in the comprehensive list of references.

2 September 2013

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Abstract

This study refers to the use of two languages in education at a satellite campus of the University of Namibia situated in the far north of the country in the town of Ongwediva. The dominant community language in this region is Oshiwambo.

The official language of the country, and of the particular university campus, is English. As the majority of students come from this region, the dominant first language on this campus among staff and students is Oshiwambo. This research gives a description of multilingualism prevalent among individuals and in the community on this particular campus; it also explains some of the characterising features of a plurilingual community of practice in this higher education (HE) institution.

This thesis gives a description of communicative practices in a multilingual classroom at the particular HE institution in this rural town. It aims to document how practices of code-switching between Oshiwambo and English are used in facilitating (or hindering) learning as this becomes manifest in classroom discourse. Also, it aims to explain the kind of mobility that is enabled and sometimes also enforced by linguistic diversity within a community such as the one investigated here on the Hifikepunye Pohamba campus in Ongwediva.

Findings of this study provide evidence that most lecturers and students, even many of foreign origin, alternate between two languages, namely between Oshiwambo and English. Although the practice of code switching is neither unusual nor discouraged, the data indicates that it occurs much less in formal classroom discourse than in informal discourse and in smaller group discussions. Observed and recorded presentations by the lecturer are done in English and responses by students in the lecture are given largely in English.

Code switching from English to Oshiwambo happens when students need to articulate themselves more precisely than their English proficiency allows. Such code switching also serves other purposes such as including and excluding other conversants, mediating new knowledge, changing tone, etc. L1 speakers of languages other than Oshiwambo do at times experience social isolation, and exclusion in collaborative learning. Nevertheless, many informally acquire proficiency in Oshiwambo and so are accommodated into the educational discourse.

The mobility of the local Namibian population as well as that of people from neighbouring countries, enhances the multilingualism which has to be accommodated in lectures and in out-of-classroom interaction. In spite of multilingual repertoires, the participants in the study all ascribe to a model of “double monolingualism” in that they regard their linguistic repertoires not as intersecting language systems, but as separate systems with distinct functions in different contexts. Their linguistic practices, however, display much more unconscious integration of the variety of languages they know.

The study finds that it is vital for educators to take cognisance of these findings in order to make better use of the linguistic resources of the communities represented among lecturers and students.

Opsomming

Hierdie studie gee aandag aan die gebruik van twee tale in onderrig by 'n satellietkampus van die Universiteit van Namibië, wat in die verre noorde van die land geleë is, in die dorp Ongwediva. Die dominante streektaal wat hierdie gemeenskap gebruik, is Oshiwambo.

Die amptelike taal van die land, en van die betrokke universiteitskampus, is Engels. Aangesien die meerderheid van die studente uit die streek kom, is die mees gebruikte eerstetaal onder personeel en studente op hierdie kampus, Oshiwambo. Hierdie tesis beskryf die veeltaligheid wat aangetref word onder individue en binne die gemeenskap van hierdie hoër onderwys inrigting; dit gee ook 'n uiteensetting van enkele karakteriserende eienskappe van 'n meertalige gemeenskap wat geconstitueer word op grond van gemeenskaplike praktyke aan hierdie hoër onderwys inrigting.

Die tesis gee 'n beskrywing van kommunikatiewe gebruike in 'n veeltalige klaskamer by die betrokke inrigting vir hoër onderwys in die plattelandse dorp. Dit beoog die dokumentering van kodewisselingspraktyke tussen Oshiwambo en Engels soos dit in klaskamerdiskoerse voorkom in die fasilitering (of belemmering) van leer. Dit beoog verder om die soort mobiliteit te verduidelik wat moontlik gemaak word, en soms ook afgedwing word deur veeltaligheid binne 'n gemeenskap soos die een wat hier aan die Hifikepunye Pohamba kampus in Ongwediva ondersoek word.

Die bevindinge van die ondersoek wys daarop dat die meeste dosente en studente, selfs baie wat van vreemde herkoms is, afwisselend twee tale, nl. Oshiwambo en Engels, gebruik. Alhoewel die praktyk van kodewisseling nie ongewoon is nie, en ook nie ontmoedig word nie, toon die data dat dit minder dikwels in die formele klaskamerdiskoerse voorkom as in informele diskoerse en in kleiner groepbesprekings. Klasaanbiedinge van die dosent wat waargeneem en opgeneem is, sowel as terugvoer van die studente in die lesing is grootliks in Engels gedoen.

Kodewisseling van Engels na Oshiwambo vind plaas as studente voel dat hulle iets meer presies wil verwoord as wat hulle Engels-taalvaardigheid toelaat. Sodanige kodewisseling het ook ander funksies, soos die insluiting of uitsluiting van ander gespreksgenote, die bemiddeling van nuwe kennis, 'n verandering in toon, en dergelike. Eerstetaalsprekers van ander tale as Oshiwambo ervaar wel van tyd tot tyd dat hulle geïsoleer word, en dat hulle by gesamentlike leer-praktyke uitgesluit word. Nogtans verwerf baie van die nie-Oshiwambosprekendes informeel kennis van Oshiwambo sodat hulle dan wel in die opvoedkundige diskoerse geakkommodeer word.

Die mobiliteit van die plaaslike Namibiese bevolking sowel as dié van mense uit buurlande, lei tot groter voorkoms van veeltaligheid wat in lesings en in die buite-klaskamer interaksie geakkommodeer moet word. Ten spyte van talige repertoires wat meer tale as net twee insluit, werk die deelnemers aan hierdie studie deurgaans met 'n model waarna verwys word as “dubbele eentaligheid” (“*double monolingualism*”), wat inhou dat hulle hul kennis van verskeie tale nie verstaan as oorvleuelende, gemeenskaplik funksionerende stelsels nie, maar as aparte stelsels met verskillende funksies in verskillende kontekste. Hulle talige gebruike vertoon egter heelwat meer onbewuste integrasie van die verskeidenheid tale wat hulle ken.

Die studie vind dit noodsaaklik dat opvoedkundiges kennis neem van hierdie bevindinge ten einde beter gebruik te maak van die taalbronne van die onderskeie gemeenskappe wat deur die dosente en studente verteenwoordig word.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the study

This study will refer to the use of two languages in education at a satellite campus of the University of Namibia situated in the far north of the country in the town of Ongwediva. The dominant community language in this region is Oshiwambo. The official language of the country, and of the particular university campus, is English. As the majority of students come from this region, the first language (L1) most widely represented among staff and students on this campus is Oshiwambo. Other languages that are represented in the staff and student body include local community languages such as Herero, Silozi, Damara, and Nama¹. As there are also a number of foreign students from neighbouring countries such as Zimbabwe, as well as a number of lecturers from elsewhere, including Nigeria, the Philippines and India, this community can be identified as ‘multilingual’ or ‘plurilingual’². Therefore the research will give a description of multilingualism on the particular campus and in the town and the region; it will also identify and try to explain some of the characterising features of a multilingual community of practice in this higher education institution. In doing so, this project will count as a case study that illustrates and reflects on how the variety of linguistic resources of such a multilingual community are used in teaching and learning in a Southern African institution of higher education. It will investigate the concept of ‘linguistic mobility’ as this is evident in the region.

The Hifikepunye Pohamba Campus (HPC) in Ongwediva is a satellite campus of the Education Faculty of the University of Namibia. It accommodates about 760 students, of whom roughly 700 are first language (L1) speakers of Oshiwambo. Among the lecturing staff of 57, at least 45 are L1 speakers of Oshiwambo. The L1 speakers of other languages among staff and students include Damara, Otjiherero, Silozi, Nama, Shona, Persian, Hindi, Lari, Afrikaans, Filipino, Arabic, Efik as well as Gujarati. This campus is established to cater for education students registered in the

¹ Typically these languages have a majority of speakers in other regions of Namibia, such as Omaheke, Opuwo, Khomas, Otjizondjupa and Kunene where Otjiherero as well as Otjizemba (an Otjiherero variant, mainly spoken in the Opuwo region) are spoken. Silozi speakers mainly live in the Caprivi Region. Damaras are mainly found in the Erongo, Namas in the Karas region.

² Different authors use different terms for this phenomenon (see section 2.3.1 below) – often particular connotations are attached to each. In this study the terms “multilingual” and “plurilingual” are used interchangeably, although it recognises critical differences some scholars maintain. For example, the phenomenon highlighted in studies that use ‘plurilingualism’, emphasise that in many multilingual contexts speakers may have difficulties distinguishing between an L1 and an L2, and that they are adept at intuitively negotiating identities and social positions by means of various languages.

Faculty of Education³. The campus currently offers B.Ed Primary, that is Pre and Lower Primary (Grades 0-4) as well as Upper Primary (Grades 5-7) courses. As from 2013, HPC is offering Maths and Science as an area of specialisation and it is also offering offering B.Ed Secondary (Grades 8-12) qualifications. Once students complete their training here, they will be able to teach various school subjects at either pre-primary schools or at upper primary schools of their choice, anywhere in the country.

This study is interested in the ways in which an African plurilingual community manages the linguistic variety inside of an educational institution where learning takes place even when speakers have a diversity of linguistic backgrounds.

1.2 Research aims

This project intends to give a description of communicative practices in a multilingual classroom at a higher education institution in a rural town. It aims to document how code-switching between Oshiwambo and English is used in facilitating or hindering learning as this is made evident by the classroom discourse recorded and observed. Also, it aims to gain an understanding of the kind of mobility that is enabled and sometimes also enforced by linguistic diversity within a community such as the one investigated here on the HPC in Ongwediva. An example of such forced mobility can be found where first language (L1) speakers of Shona, who have been forced to migrate to the region due to political pressures in their home country, or for the sake of the educational opportunities offered to them in Ongwediva, are obliged to become multilingual because of such 'mobility'. Also, fluency in languages other than an indigenous language of the region enables mobility within Namibia and beyond when students have qualified and are seeking improved social and employment opportunities. The study aims to show how using English allows for communication across linguistic barriers, and facilitates mobility of the speakers and of the variety of languages included in students' repertoires.

1.3 Research questions

The project has been guided by an investigation that sought to answer the following research questions:

³ The numbers given here represent those of the year 2011, the year in which the data for the research was collected.

- (i) In a higher education setting where English is the official language of learning, what are the kinds of code-switching used among lecturers and students in classroom communication?
- (ii) In interviews which topicalise the use of various languages in learning, how do speakers of different first languages refer to their experience in a setting where both English and Oshiwambo are used in the classroom interaction?
- (iii) What does the information gained through observation of classroom discourse (as in question 1) and interviews with students (as in question 2), disclose regarding mobility, language and learning in higher education teacher training?

1.4 Theoretical areas of interest

Four areas of research provide interesting and relevant theoretical work to be considered in this thesis, namely: the sociolinguistic aspects of code switching (including how and why people code switch in multilingual classroom contexts); the notions of ‘multilingual communities’ and ‘plurilingual communities’; “little narratives” on language identity; and mobility, language and learning.

In the literature review given in chapter two each of these areas will be dealt with to show which scholarly work will be drawn on in describing and explaining the multilingual classroom communication practices.

1.5 Methodology

In addition to a general framework provided by literature on the central issues mentioned here, data was collected in the following ways: through (i) non-participant observation by the researcher; (ii) video-recordings of two lectures of one second year module; (iii) interviews conducted with six students: two Oshiwambo L1 speakers, three Otjiherero L1 speakers and one Otjizemba L1 (a variety of Otjiherero) speaker; and, (iv) prompted “little narratives”⁴ where participants were asked to give an overview of their linguistic profile and educational experiences related to language(s) of learning.

⁴ The term ‘narrative’ as defined by De Fina (2000: 133) will be used, namely as reference to “all kinds of accounts of past events, such as chronicles, life stories, etc.” In this case, not life stories, but recounts of selected, significant events form the narrative.

No claims of statistical representativity are made. This is a study which gives insight into how multilingualism is “enacted” in a single Namibian institution for higher education. The scope of the research is limited by the time constraints and requirements of the particular MPhil programme within which the research is conducted.

1.6 Significance of the study

This study intends in a sense to showcase this university’s use of different languages. Specifically it contests a monolingual approach to the use of languages in a multilingual educational setting. As discussed above, the majority language of the university’s community is Oshiwambo. It is a language spoken by students to other students (their peers) in or outside class, as well by staff members either to their students or their colleagues, in formal or informal social situations.

Oshiwambo, which is spoken by the majority of the students, among administrative staff as well as the academic staff, is mutually intelligible with Otjiherero. This is not the case for any other language represented at HPC. Silozi and Afrikaans, which have a considerable number of speakers at this campus as opposed to other languages referred to earlier, belong to different language families and therefore are not mutually intelligible with Oshiwambo. The lingua franca at this campus which is spoken as a second language (L2) by almost the whole community is English. It is used between speakers who do not share the same L1, either in formal or informal situations. This study will document- and add to a limited body of literature on the use of varieties of African languages in education – even when the language of teaching and learning is a strongly developed world language such as English.

1.7 Chapter layout

In Chapter 2, an overview of the relevant literature is provided, which includes received scholarly insights on pertinent aspects of code switching, bilingual education, multilingual classrooms, language in learning, language of instruction, language and mobility, language repertoire and choice and plurilingualism. Chapter 3 discusses a number of methodological issues relevant to this particular study. Chapter 4 deals with description and analysis of data.. Lastly the discussion of data as well as the conclusion is given in Chapter 5.

1.8 Key terms

The following list gives key terms used in the study with a description of how the term is to be understood in this text, in alphabetical order.

Accommodation is a sociolinguistic term used to refer to how people modify their way of speaking to become more or less like that of their addressee(s) (Crystal 1991: 4). Finslayson & Slabbert (1997:387) use the term specifically in reference to a code switching strategy that speakers use to facilitate communication with other speakers from other ethnic groups by speaking the language of the particular group in order to invite their participation in the conversation. This is used to avoid alienation of the minority language speaker.

Bilingual education refers to the teaching of school content subjects via two languages. Often there is a widely used lingua franca as medium of instruction (MoI) such as English, as well as a community language with a large number of speakers in the educational context, such as Oshiwambo. These languages can be used either in equal or unequal measure in terms of time allocated to each in learning and teaching (Banda 2010:207). A different aspect of bilingual education is explained by Baker (2011:207) who distinguishes between “transitional” bilingual education (which aims to shift the learner from the home, minority language to the dominant, majority language) and “maintenance” bilingual education (which attempts to foster the development and extended use of the minority language in the child).

Code switching refers to a communicative practice of shifting between two languages, which occurs typically among bilingual and multilingual speakers. It has various functions which include keeping the flow of communication going or switching to the language in which the speaker is more proficient. Auer (1984, 1998) has shown that code switching in interactional contexts corresponds to the preferences of the individual performing the switching or those participating in the conversation.

Embedded language refers to the “other” language participating in code switching (CS), i.e. the language which introduces words and phrases but not the dominant grammatical structure of the interaction. The term distinguishes the inserted language sections from the *matrix* language (see definition below). When an interaction takes place, the embedded language contributes fewer morphemes to the interaction than does the matrix language.

Language and mobility: Blommaert (2010:6) defines mobility sociolinguistically as a trajectory through different stratified, controlled and monitored spaces in which language “gives you away” or expresses identity. In this way when people leave their places of origin to settle for a longer or shorter period in a new community, they leave with their languages, thus these languages become mobile.

Language choice is a term that refers to the selection from a number of possibilities, of a particular language or language variety for a given situation. The code a person selects/chooses may depend on the ethnic background, sex, age, and the level of education of the speaker and of the person with whom he/she is speaking (Richard, Platt and Platt 1992: 58). This can also refer to when two or more languages are widely spoken or used on a daily or frequent basis by bilinguals, and speakers have an option of changing to the other language, for instance to include others in the conversation (Baker 2011: 5).

Language in learning refers to a code that is used to process new knowledge that is learned, both in formal and informal settings. It is the language(s) used by the teacher and learners in transmitting and acquiring new knowledge.

Language of instruction this is also referred to as the ‘medium of instruction’ (MoI), which is the main language in which instruction is given, or the language through which schooling is provided.

Language repertoires are codes or language varieties known by a speaker, which s/he has at her/his disposal, enabling her/him to perform specific social roles in everyday communication, in her/his speech community.

Matrix language refers to the dominant language participating in CS. It can further be defined as the language that determines the grammatical structure and carries more morphemes in an interaction as opposed to the *embedded* language.

Multilingualism is defined by Crystal (1991:228) as the ability to make use of two or more languages, either by an individual speaker or by a community of speakers. Banda (2010: 223) refers to multilingualism as a phenomenon related to “the acquisition and use of two or more languages”.

Multilingual classroom is a term used to refer to a classroom in which the learners are speakers of a variety of different languages as their first languages (L1s) and as second

languages (L2s). Often two or more languages are used as languages for teaching and learning, in transmitting content matter, not merely in teaching the languages as subjects (Banda: 2000:223)

Plurilingualism is defined as the “product of double and (or multiple) first language acquisition and/or perfect mastery - itself perfectly balanced - of two languages” (Ludi and Py 2001). This is further defined by Psaltou-Joycey and Kantaridou (2009:470) as “the ability to use (a number of) languages for the purposes of communication and to take part in intercultural interaction, where a person, viewed as a social agent, has proficiency of varying degrees of several languages and experience of several cultures”.

Translanguaging is defined as a communicative practice engaged in by bilinguals “accessing different linguistic features or various modes of what are described as autonomous languages, in order to maximize communicative potential”(Garcia 2009: 140). It is a practice that does not focus on the distinct languages that multilinguals know, but on how the linguistic resources they do have, are best used in making meaning within a given context.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter provides an overview of the literature that has informed this study. It focuses on work that will assist in answering the research questions given in section 1.3 above, and will specifically pay attention to the four areas of interest given in section 1.4. Studies that reflect on these issues in contexts other than Namibia are examined, as well as ones closer to home, have been read and, where relevant, will be introduced here.

2.2 Sociolinguistic aspects of code switching

Code switching is defined by Myers-Scotton (1993b:182; 1993c:114) as the use of two or more languages in the same conversation, where the different languages are distinguished as either the matrix or the embedded languages. Meyerhoff (2006: 115-117, 120-121) distinguishes between code mixing and code switching in more general terms. She refers to the sensitivity of people who speak more than one language to differences in vitality of the languages, and how the languages have different values in different contexts. “Code switching” then refers to “the alternation between varieties, or codes, across sentences or clause boundaries”, while “code mixing” refers to such alternation “within a clause or phrase” (Meyerhoff 2006: 287).

This study is interested in code switching (CS) as it has been observed that this is a very regular phenomenon in classroom discourse in a multilingual community. Both teachers and learners code switch in the process of facilitating learning. Besides the two cited above, different researchers offer different definitions of code switching and different reasons for its occurrence. Although the literature on code switching is vast, studies that record and reflect on code switching in tertiary classrooms are limited. According to Finlayson and Slabbert (1998: 60) South African studies in CS have tended to follow the history of African Linguistics and they seem to run parallel with studies on CS in the rest of Africa.

Two aspects of Finlayson and Slabbert’s study (1997) regarding the social functions of code switching are particularly of relevance to this study. Firstly, their study on code switching between Zulu, Xhosa, Southern Sotho, Tswana, Afrikaans, Tsotsitaal and English was

presented to identify and give particulars of the social dynamics within which a range of code-switching takes place. Secondly, they presented a range of different types of CS which occur within the data they had collected in the South African urban environment, ranging from conversations between shebeen friends, stokvel friends, female friends, and male colleagues (Finlayson and Slabbert 1997: 389-399). In cases such as these, it was found that the strategy of code switching was most often used as a form of accommodation (1997:384) in which people apparently switched between languages such as English and Southern Sotho, inserting English words as a way of including an English interlocutor, and accommodating such a person as one of the participants in a conversation. Finlayson & Slabbert's (1997: 409) study found that respondents also code switched to employ measures to make themselves understood. They refer to Gibbons (1979 in Finlayson & Slabbert 1997), who pointed out that group dynamics influence code switching behaviour.

In extract (1) below Finlayson & Slabbert (1997:390) provide an example of code switching between Southern Sotho and English, where Southern Sotho is the matrix language, with intrasentential embedding of English words.

- (1) *Nka re ke ntate o shebang utho tsa malapa jwale ka ntate o mong le o mong o NORMAL*
[I would say that this man (father) views things much as any normal man would do]

In their concluding observations, Finlayson & Slabbert (1997:418) emphasise that it is not always easy to accurately explain the use of CS in written or verbal communication – contextual knowledge as well as an understanding of pragmatic conventions of a particular language community may be required to give a lucrative explanation. In the following sections I refer to studies which give various possible reasons for why people code switch in educational settings.

2.2.1 Code switching in southern African educational contexts

A study by Adendorff (1993) was done in a context similar to my study in Namibia, namely at the University of Natal in South Africa. According to him, code switching is a prominent feature of the discourse on the campuses of traditionally white, liberal South African universities where increasingly first language (L1) speakers of indigenous South African languages were being registered. He found that Zulu-English switches regularly occur in the campus discourse of the University of Natal. Black students in the Department of Linguistics, when asked directly whether they sometimes code switch, denied it at first. However, the data

revealed that code switching was a regular feature and that it was highly functional, even if not done consciously. Adendorff (1993: 4) found that code switching “is a communicative resource, which enables teachers and pupils to accomplish a considerable number and a range of social and educational objectives”.

He refers to four instances of code switching in his study. In the first case a Zulu teacher discusses a poem in an English lesson, but then resorted to Zulu, apparently because he felt that his pupils did not understand what he was saying. Zulu was used to advance the teacher’s interpretation of poem because he felt that learners would not understand what he was saying. Adendorff (1993:10) asserts that “Zulu, throughout, clearly fulfils an academic function. It is the code with which the teacher tries to interpret the meaning of the poem and to make the poem accessible”. It was found further that Zulu was used as a code of encouragement, thus it also served such a social function.

In the second case, a Biology teacher code switched between English and Zulu to check whether his pupils were following. Further, as in the first case, such switching was found to enable the teacher to express implicit encouragement to his pupils, marking solidarity with the pupils.

In the third case, a Geography teacher was found again to use code switching to serve two purposes, namely a social and an academic one. Zulu in this case was often used “as a measure of exercising classroom management, rather than a vehicle for transmitting academic knowledge” (Adendorff, 1993:13). Further, Adendorff (1993:14) finds that there are noteworthy exchanges during the Geography lesson that suggest how diverse the ranges of discourse-level functions are which code switches can serve. For example, in extract (2) below the teacher switched to Zulu to demonstrate approval of the learner’s response, and to praise him:

(2) T: What is a flood plain, mh?

P: A flood plain is a heap of soil or sand which is deposited on banks of
a river or a stream when the river or a stream has been in flood .

T: Very good Sigqemezana, *iyasebenzake silwane*. (speaking loudly)

[...Sigqemezana, you are really working very hard”]

In the fourth case, the school principal employed code switching for the purpose of paraphrasing his message in order to reiterate as well as to reinforce what he is saying (Adendorff 1993: 16).

Early studies of South African CS focused on indigenous languages and colonial languages such as Southern Sotho (Kathi, 1992) and Xhosa-English (Thipa, 1992). Kamwangamalu (1989) investigated patterns and possible reasons for code switching in Lingala-French in Zaire, as well as between French and other Zairean languages, such as Tshiluba and Swahili. Thipa (1998: 65) suggested that Xhosa-English CS often arises as a result of native speakers' unfamiliarity with, or ignorance of an appropriate word. He argues as follows:

That then forces the native speaker, especially a bilingual one, to resort to the language with which he seems to be most familiar, namely English in most cases among the Xhosa speakers ... Code switching ... serves to express ideas with which the vocabulary of Xhosa cannot cope or ideas which are alien to indigenous Xhosa culture. Thipa (1998: 65)

Hancock's study (1997) examined the code switching that goes on during group work in language classes in which learners share an L1 which is not the MoI. He refers to growing interest in recent years in the interaction that takes place between learners when they are asked to work unsupervised in pairs or groups during a language lesson. "A detailed analysis of the data produced two layers labelled off-record and on-record" in which "off-record" conversations were often conducted in a language to which the teacher had no access (Hancock 1997: 233). Such code switching was interpreted as a way in which students marked privacy, as if lowering their voices and deliberating in a way intended to exclude the teacher. . Another study which refers to code switching in a classroom context that I would like to include here is that of Molepo (2008:36-40). In a Life Orientation class, she observed that the educator code switched to emphasise and assure clarity, as in repeating the term for "wild spinach" in Setswana, "*morogo wa leroto*" assuming that the learners would know "leroto" from their own context. Another function of code-switching noted in this study, was illustrated in how some educators switch specifically to insert discourse markers, especially when they are concluding their turns and want to ascertain that learners are following. For instance, a teacher would end an explanation she gave in English, thus with English as the matrix language, with Setwana phrases as in (3a) or (3b), embedded:

(3a) ... le a kwesisa? [...do you understand ?]

(3b) ... *o, ga go bjalo?* [...*isn't it?*]

The reverse is also reported, where a conversation in Setswana as matrix language, uses embedded English terms for which the semantic equivalent in Setswana is either not available as a single lexical item, or is not known to the speaker, as in

(4) *Ke tla ba late mosomong because ke ya go thoma Circuit Office*
[I will be late at work because I first have to go to the Circuit Office]

Mouton (2007) looked at the simultaneous use of two or more media of instruction in Namibian upper primary classes and she found that code switching takes place in English classes quite regularly. In her study it was found that code switching had useful teaching purposes, such as transmission of knowledge, clarification of concepts or meanings, and assisting learners whose English language competence was still at a lower than functional level. Code switching from English to the L1 of the teacher and some learners was also used in the classroom when discipline problems arose and when learners were not paying attention.

In a very interesting study of literacy practices among African language speaking students at the University of the Western Cape, Banda (2007) noted how such students used their mother tongue as an educational resource. Although all these students had had English as the official MoI during their secondary school careers, only 17% of a group of 85 respondents claimed that their education had been in English only. This study confirms not only that African languages are widely used in classrooms, but also that students rely on them in developing their own knowledge, even as they are aware of the need to developing their English language skills. Excerpt (5) will illustrate the reality and difficulties encountered in such moving between two languages in learning:

(5) I: So you wouldn't mind if that question was in Xhosa and you have to answer that question in English.

Z: Yah it won't cause problem because I can think more in Xhosa. My problem in English you think but you can't find the good word then you end up leaving the information because it will be poor, it can't make sense.

(Banda 2007:10)

In a different context, but with a similar interest, is the work of Ncoko, Osman & Cockcroft (2000) discussed in section 2.3.1.1 below.

2.2.2 Code switching in other than African educational contexts

Regarding informative studies outside of the African context, Sert's (2007: 11) study of language use among Turkish learners found that code switching into English in the German as a Second Language classroom in Ankara helped learners produce more target language utterances and prevented breaks in communication. This was seen as a productive classroom practice as the learners did not have the opportunity to hear or to produce target language structures outside the classroom. Different studies indicate that members of multilingual communities may code switch from a second language to their native tongue, or from their first language to a lingua franca with a wide range of intentions. Sert (2005) refers to Eldridge (1996:305-307), naming and explaining these functions of code switching as: equivalence, floor-holding, reiteration, and conflict control.

A study that investigated Jordanian university students' attitudes toward code-switching and code mixing in order to determine when and why they code switch was undertaken by Hussein (1999). The study also established the most frequently used English expressions in Arabic discourse. One of the findings was that they code switch because some Arabic expressions have no English equivalents; another referred to the easiness with which scientific concepts can be expressed; and a third mentioned the dissemination and familiarity of formulaic English expressions such as greetings, apologies and compliments.

There is a very large body of literature on code switching in educational contexts, since the early part of the 20th century when this was seen as a weakness which could be linked to educational deficiency. More recently, scholarly work acknowledges the reality of knowledge and use of more than one language in teaching and learning, and the cognitive advantages that bilingual learning appears to hold, are investigated. It has been pointed out that although code switching is the one characteristic of bilingual education that has received much attention, communicative practices in bilingual education include much more than mere shifting from one language to another in the classroom. Corson (1993: 73-75) refers to the work of Churchill (1986) on multilingual education in Canada, Belgium, Finland and Switzerland. He refers also to the practices of acknowledging and integrating the heritage languages of minority indigenous populations such as those in Australia and New Zealand (Corson 1993: 77-80). Garcia (2009: 147) refers to the multilingual situation in India and the fluidity of language boundaries and language identities.

2.3 Understanding multilingualism and plurilingualism

Studies on community multilingualism are interested in how multilingual communities, such as those in many African countries, develop individual bilingualism and multilingualism as well as managing communication between speakers of different languages in shared public spaces. ‘Multilingualism’ is then defined as “the use of three or more languages by an individual or by a group of speakers such as the inhabitants of a particular region or a nation” (Richards, Platt & Platt 1992: 238).

More recently, the term ‘plurilingualism’ has been introduced to designate a very specific kind of multilingualism in modern, mobile and mostly urban communities. Plurilingualism is defined as “the ability to use languages for the purposes of communication and to take part in intercultural interaction, where a person or an individual who knows a number of languages and is thus viewed as a “social agent” has proficiency of varying degrees in several languages and experiences of several cultures” (Psaltou-Joycey and Kantaridou 2010: 470). Ludi and Py (2009:156) consider plurilingualism as an emblem of identity, both in the spirit of protecting minorities and as a strong economic asset for society as well as the individual.

2.3.1 Multilingualism

Multilingualism is defined differently by different researchers. Many view bi/multilingualism broadly and define it as the ability to function in more than one language, without reaching the same degree of grammatical perfection in all the languages known by the individual⁵ (Psaltou-Joycey & Kantaridou 2009: 461). . Banda (2010: 223) defines multilingualism in individuals as the acquisition and the use of two or more languages, and for him, multilingual education is a setting in which two or more languages are used as languages of learning and teaching content matter, not where a variety of languages are merely taught as subjects. For Cenoz (2009: 2) multilingualism can refer to an individual and a social phenomenon. It can denote the acquisition, knowledge or use of several languages by individuals or by language communities in a specific geographic area.

2.3.1.1 Multilingualism in Africa

Studies referring to multilingualism in Africa will be discussed first. Ncoko, Osman & Cockcroft (2000) explored code switching among multilingual learners in primary schools in

⁵ For similar definitions see also (Braunmuller, 2002; Cook, 1992; Ludi and Py, 1986; Van Bezooijen & Gooskens, 2007).

South Africa. Their study gives insight into the uses of multilingual skills. The focus of their study was on the incidence of code switching in primary schools in the Gauteng Department of Education, Johannesburg and they particularly wanted to examine speakers' motivation for employing code switching. The findings from this study indicate that the use of code switching by multilingual learners in schools may be either conscious or unconscious, occurs frequently and has very specific aims. They found that learners switch from the MoI to their L1 for reasons such as defiance, in using impermissible (possibly offensive) language in order to disobey rules, multi-functional code switching, showing solidarity, or widening social distance.

Ncoko et al. (2000: 225) pointed out that South Africa has moved from a bilingual past, with English and Afrikaans as the only two official languages, to a multilingual dispensation, with 11 official languages. This gives formal recognition to a long established reality of linguistic diversity in the country. Further, their study indicates that since 1994 many urban South African schools have been made up of learners with diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds thereby markedly changing the linguistic and cultural compositions of these schools.

The Namibian situation is similar to the South African one. Before independence the indigenous African languages were limitedly recognised in school curricula. Although the new constitution elected for English as the only official language, a bilingual policy has been implemented in its education system because "shortly after independence in 1990, Namibia perceived the need to have a new language policy for schools in order to promote mother tongue use, alongside English, in schools and colleges of education (now UNAM satellite campuses)" (NIED: 2003).

Uys (2010) also did a study that illustrated how multilingualism is accommodated in schools. He followed instances of code switching by teachers in multilingual and multicultural high school classrooms in a particular district in the Northern Cape Province of South Africa. The study aimed to establish whether teachers code switch and, if so, what the functions thereof are. The study found that the teachers do indeed code switch and they do so mainly for academic purposes such as explaining and clarifying subject content. In addition, teachers also frequently code switched for social reasons such as maintaining social relationships with learners and also for being humorous as well as for classroom management purposes. The

study further found that code switching by the teacher was mainly an unmarked choice, i.e. it was done intuitively and as a regular part of their communication.

2.3.1.2 Multilingualism in countries beyond Africa

Canagarajah, cited in Ncoko et al. (2000: 229), investigated the use of code switching by secondary school teachers in English second-language classrooms in Jaffana, Sri Lanka. The findings of Canagarajah's study revealed some useful functions of code switching for both the learners and teachers in terms of classroom management, transmission of subject matter, and the negotiation of values, identities and roles. These illustrate how code switching is considered to be a way of facilitating communication as well as learning. For second language learners, it eases the path to content as well as knowledge acquisition.

A study that was conducted by Skilton-Sylvester, cited in Creese and Martin (2003: 4), focused on Khmer/English biliteracy in multilingual classrooms in the United States. She considered the legal and official language policies in relation to minority groups and links these to implicit policies and ideologies which exist outside the official discourse. It was found that different teachers create different classroom policies of their own, depending on the underlying ideologies, meaning that the teachers at times contest and at other times support ideologies about the education of linguistic diverse students that they encounter in their classrooms. The default policy in the United States is one that advances English only as MoI, and only minimally accommodates learners with other L1s.

In ground-breaking work on the prevalence of bilingualism and the ways in which educational systems often deny the value of the minority home language of learners in studying through medium of L2 English, Garcia (2009: 143-144) refers to 'recursive' and 'dynamic bilingualism'. 'Recursive bilingualism' refers to bilingual practices that are sustained after suppression; 'dynamic bilingualism' refers to language practices that develop in response to "the multilingual, multimodal terrain" that has been developing in accordance with greater mobility of populations in the 21st century. She introduces the term "translanguaging" (Garcia 2009: 148) to refer to the ways in which mobile people deal with the increasing linguistic complexity of modern societies. She refers also to new forms of bilingual education that are developing as a result of the linguistic diversity in classrooms, where such translanguaging processes are witnessed (Garcia 2009: 149-150). The data I collected and which is analysed in chapter 4, testifies to such translanguaging practices.

Resonating Garcia's suggestions for adjusting language-in-education policy in the United States (and elsewhere in multilingual communities that accommodate migrant communities as well as a variety of indigenous groups), are suggestions made by Spolsky (2011: 5) for bringing together "issues of foreign, heritage, and immigrant languages" to start to build a unified policy that will include "traditional values of learning other languages and cultures".

In a European context Mick's (2011) analytical work aimed to deconstruct language learning in multilingual, multicultural contexts as an educational problem and to reconstitute it as an integrated part of social practice in any classroom. The particular study in this case was an observed learning activity that took place in a 2nd grade class in a Luxembourgish primary school. Portuguese, Luxembourgish, German and French were the languages used in this study. The activity involved the children working on the computer on their own narration of a European soccer championship match where Italy was playing against Portugal. It was found that "linguistic diversity and diversity of voices do not cause any problems to the observed primary school children. They are capable of simultaneously using (and thus learning to use) a huge variety of 'voices' and to integrate different, even competing discourses, languages and realities in their communicational strategies" Mick (2011:36).

This is further demonstrated through a study that contested the legitimacy of restricting the use of minority languages in discursive practices in institutional sites, namely in the local Panjabi community and in an English school in Midlands of England. (Creese and Martin 2003: 80). The study found that Panjabi has legitimacy among the learners from the Panjabi language community. Although they often spoke to their siblings in both Panjabi and English, they spoke Panjabi only with their parents and their grandparents. Some of them were dismayed to be faced with the prospect of not speaking Panjabi and indicated their eagerness to maintain it. They could see the necessity of being bilingual, as English is needed for education as well as for communication purposes in their home country (England), and Panjabi is needed when visiting relatives in India or Pakistan.

In school context it was found that "they use Panjabi, the non-legitimate language, to establish order in the classroom within their group. Thus code switching, as a form of 'attracting attention' is used to negotiate authority and order" (Creese and Martin, 2003:87).

Dufva, Suni, Aro & Salo (2011) working in a Finnish educational setting, discussed the conceptualizations of language in the context of second and foreign language learning and

teaching in a study aimed at investigating the use of various languages in both research and classroom practices. Dufva et al. (2011:115) observed that most language communities are now, and have possibly always been, ‘bilingual’ or ‘multilingual’ even in the most traditional sense of the word. So two or more languages are commonly used in most of the communities their study considered. They found that a large proportion of these community members are communicatively highly functional in their use of the various languages.

The view of multilingualism is articulated in the European Union context where they refer to “the cooperation between Member States in the field of education while fully respecting their cultural and diversity in teaching and the organization of education systems”. This is supported by the European Commission because it is seen as having special importance for the Lisbon aims of economic growth and social cohesion (Kivela and Ylonen, 2011). Further, the European Commission (2007) states that through multilingualism learners can develop their awareness of different languages as well as their motivation for language learning. It is essential to note that for the European Commission multilingualism has many different advantages which include increasing European mobility” Cenoz (2009: 5).

Graddol (1999), cited in Canagarajah (2007: 925), predicted that in the future English will be a language used mainly in multilingual contexts as a second language and for communication between non-native speakers. Canagarajah (2007: 925) supports this perspective, finding not only that linguistic diversity is a pervasive characterising feature of many modern communities, but also that there is constant interaction between language groups specifically using English as a Lingua Franca. Then English becomes a very fluid medium “which is intersubjectively constructed in each specific context of interaction.... and negotiated by each set of speakers for their purposes. He finds that in constant interaction people in multilingual communities have “multiple memberships” and that they are able to balance their affiliation to local and global groups “as the situation demands” (Canagarajah 2007: 930).

2.3.2 Plurilingualism

Goumoes, cited in Andrade and Pinho (2009: 314), sees plurilingualism as a multidimensional phenomenon involving several interconnected levels of individual, societal and interpersonal ways of knowing and using a number of different languages. It is interesting to note that English, amongst all other global languages, is considered to be a global lingua franca in the sense that

it is the language which is habitually used by people whose mother tongues are different in order to facilitate communication between them (Barotchi in Fielder 2011: 81).

“As a lingua franca, the English language has a mediating role, which may be a bridge to a plurilingual Europe” (Sert 2007:10). In this regard the Council of Europe clearly declares that

The aims of language education are profoundly modified. It is no longer seen as simply to achieve ‘mastery’ of one or two, or even three languages, each taken in isolation, with the ‘ideal native speaker’ as the ultimate model. Instead, the aim is to develop a linguistic repertory, in which all linguistic abilities have a place. This implies, of course that the languages offered in educational constitutions should be diversified and students given the opportunity to develop a plurilingual competence. (cited in Sert 2007:10)

Referring still to how English fulfils a primary role in plurilingual and multilingual development, Sert (2007:11) notes the role this global language plays in creating intercultural awareness among many people worldwide. Alves & Mendes (2006: 212) explain the ‘plurilingualism’ and ‘intercompetence’ as two important concepts within the multicultural European context. A respect for the diversity of national identities is emphasized by both the Council of Europe and the European Union. For these communities plurilingualism is embodied when various linguistic resources allow for communication in multilingual environments and positively acknowledge cultural diversity (Alves & Mendes 2006: 212). Therefore they conceptualise plurilingualism as “the basis for a Europe defined by its unity in diversity” (Alves & Mendes 2006: 216-7).

Psaltou-Joycey and Kantaridou (2010) conducted an investigation in Greece to look at the plurilingual competence of their students who were learning foreign languages in an academic context. They were interested in two dimensions: (a) degrees of plurilingualism were investigated, i.e. they compared the competencies of bilingual and trilingual students; and (b) the levels of proficiency among trilingual students were investigated. Their findings indicated that trilingual students used more strategies more frequently than bilinguals, especially those that promote metalinguistic awareness, and that more advanced trilinguals made more frequent use of strategies, which mainly came from the cognitive and metacognitive categories. The researchers suggested that findings of their study could be used for the promotion of plurilingualism in the sense that bilinguals could learn to draw on the learning strategies and styles of trilinguals and thus maintain the motivation for language learning.

In a different context, in South Africa, Molepo (2008: 12) refers to bilingualism, which is read here as related to multilingualism and plurilingualism, as a crucial capability in that it assists with the promotion of a multilingual and multicultural South Africa. She suggests that learners should reach a high level of proficiency in at least two, but ideally in more languages. This means that in education, while learners' home languages are to be maintained and developed, they should simultaneously become competent in the additional languages.

2.4 Narratives on language repertoire and use

In a large and a growing body of literature a number of scholars have investigated the concept of identity in relation to language. (See De Fina & Georgakopoulou 2008; Blommaert 2003; Dong & Blommaert 2009). Within this literature identity is broadly defined as a fluid and constantly changing condition rather than a pre-existing, singular category. Identity is also taken not as a natural fact; it is not possessed but performed, and each of us is seen to perform a repertoire of various identities, whether group or individual ones (Fiedler 2011: 84). Further, Fiedler suggests that identity, as it is signalled by non-native speakers of a language such as English, is based on three constituents: firstly, on English native culture(s); secondly, on the speakers' own sociocultural background (L1 culture); and thirdly, on an incipient awareness of membership in a specific speech community.

The Namibian Language Policy document asserts the following regarding language and identity: "a person's identity is contained in the language and the culture one inherits from ones' forefathers" (NIED, 2003: 4). I make a connection here between Fielder's work and the Namibian Language Policy in that they both refer to identity as one that can be demonstrated in language, and as stated by Fielder (2011:84-85) identity is expressed in and through language and he does not think that one can be detached from the other.

In this thesis I am going to look at how multilingual participants give small narratives that articulate aspects of their identity which are specifically related to how they learnt and use the variety of languages in their repertoires in the educational setting of the HPC. Here, I first give some specifics about current perceptions of 'identity', and then give details of "small narratives" as instruments in collecting data.

In Europe, multilingualism in nations, regions, institutions and individuals is increasingly frequently seen as a marker of identity, thus as a feature which is an essential component of European culture (Ludi and Py 2009:156). According to Puttergill & Lielde (2000: 98) identity in

pre-modern (traditional) societies was perceived as “undifferentiated, socially derived, fixed to a position, and unproblematic”. This position no longer holds, so that Puttergill & Liede (2000: 98) now state that identity offers “far more than an obvious commonsense way of talking about individuality, community and solidarity”, and that ‘identity’ has provided a means of understanding “the interplay between subjective experiences of the world and the cultural and historical settings in which those fragile, meaningful subjectives are formed”.

Gervais-Lambony (2006: 53) refers to identity as a complex concept which refers both to the individual and to the collective. He argues that multiple identities are not organized according to a hierarchical order, as the individual chooses one or the other according to circumstances or has to refer to one or the other depending both on the place in which he finds himself and the company within which he finds himself. Thus identity is informed both by time, choice and place where an individual finds him/herself (Gervais-Lambony: 60). Each individual belongs to different identity communities and asserts his/her belonging to one or the other depending on circumstances (Gervais-Lambony 2006; Puttergill and Liede 2004). It is further asserted that individuals draw meaning from belonging to more than one group. They construct and maintain these multiple identities that emerge under different circumstances in their daily lives. This rings true for students who are multilingual or plurilingual as they have different linguistic roles to play, as will be indicated in the discussion of my data in chapter 6 below.

Heller (1995) and Auer (1998) have referred to code switching as a marker of identity. Their research suggests that bilinguals display agency in selecting codes which serve unique needs, such as when they locally co-construct identity. De Fina (2009: 233) points out that narratives told in interviews have become a central tool of data collection and analysis in a variety of disciplines within the social sciences. Such narratives are often informative of identity construction. Recent research on narratives has emphasized the situatedness of storytelling and its embedding in social life. Furthermore, researchers have shown that narratives often exhibit complex and fascinating relationships within different contexts, and that their functions and structure vary a great deal as a result of their insertion in interactional situations and social practices (De Fina 2009: 237). This MA-study relates well to the suggestions of De Fina as it uses small narratives produced in interviews and in less formal conversation to inform the researcher regarding sociolinguistic aspects of the identities and practices of multilinguals on a tertiary education campus.

De Fina (2000) uses the term “narrative” quite broadly to refer to all kinds of accounts of past events, such as chronicles and life stories. De Fina (2000) investigated ‘identity’ by looking at linguistic strategies used by a group of undocumented Mexican immigrants to identify characters in storytelling. This study is of utmost importance because it serves to better understand the experiences of these immigrants regarding their insertion as well as accommodation into the host society. It is also of interest to this study, because of the migrant status of many of the students who were participants in this project.

Other scholars, such as Clandinin & Connelly (1994) and Sikes & Gale (2006) have shown how the telling of narratives allows people to present themselves and others in certain roles by placing themselves and others as characters in storyworlds. De Fina (2000: 131) refers to the fact that the undocumented Mexican immigrants who go to the USA find out that in addition to being economically exploited, they also face the challenge of defining who they are in the society in which certain prejudiced images of them already exist and are circulated through public discourse and the media.

Canagarajah (2007: 929) refers to the ways in which students “shuttle between the identities of learner, friend and in-group community member” in relation to the teachers, while they also convey contextually relevant meanings and gain communicative competences such as code switching. These communicative acts and identities give insight into the complexity of the different kinds of linguistic proficiency students use in their learning.

In this present study, it is important to take cognisance of the “travel narratives” referred to in De Fina’s (2008) study. Travel narratives/accounts were often told in connection with talk about origins. Participants in the study presented in this thesis similarly referred to their places of origin when they were asked why they opted to come to HPC where the linguistic discordance they would have to deal with would have been clear from the start. In all cases there were alternatives of going to another campus in the country or one of the neighbouring countries where in some cases linguistic diversity would have been less trying for them, but in others it may have been largely similar.

2.5 Mobility, language and learning

This section turns to another field of interest that this study has, namely to the effects of the mobility of some populations on learning, particularly where the languages of learning as well as other languages that migrants are obliged to learn, are new and unfamiliar to them. Dufva et al.

(2011) suggest that learning an additional language is a process in which different semiotic-heteroglossic and multimodal-resources are appropriated and that first, second and additional languages should not be regarded as closed systems of separate abstract codes. They believe that the different languages that speakers know are not isolated systems, but are interactive, and that speakers will draw on all the languages that they know in trying to communicate within a new environment.

With respect to language learning, Bialystock (2001) and Cummins (2000), cited in Psaltou-Joycey & Kantaridou (2010) refer to international research that has documented how bilinguals show increased metalinguistic abilities when they learn new languages. Such knowledge tends to facilitate further language learning. “Another fact to take into account is that for minority language speakers learning an international language in many cases means learning at least a third language” (Cenoz and Jessner 2000).

Nayak, et al., (1990), cited in Psaltou-Joycey and Kantaridou (2010), investigated the language learning skills of monolingual and plurilingual students and concluded that plurilinguals could adjust their learning strategies to the requirements of a task more effectively than monolingual students. It is thus concluded that plurilinguals have an advantage over monolinguals in language learning and the use of communicative strategies. The more languages plurilinguals know, the better their ability to progress in more than one language, it seems.

Dufva et al. (2011: 112) go on to state that learning a language comes to be seen as a process of *addition*. As students and other people all over the world learn languages, it makes it easy for people to move, as communication is enabled. “Languages now travel globally through various institutions and practices, such as migration, tourism, working life, human relationships, and most importantly, media” (Dufva et al., 2011:115).

Dufva et al. further say that this phenomenon of languages that travel with the speakers connects with multilingualism precisely in that learners who move to a new environment for their studies, during their life span may have to learn new languages, and in any case will face new speech genres, assume new positions, attach new values and adjust their language user identities with respect to various usages and languages they encounter.

Cenoz (2009:10) argues that bilingualism and multilingualism can open new possibilities for speakers of minority languages. The development of international communications and

international mobility has increased the need that speakers of minority languages have to learn other languages.

Zigler & Eskildsen (2009) state that mobility may be important in improving language, but one also needs languages to engage in mobility. They go on to say that languages are best learned if one goes into a different language community, thus to learn Oshiwambo best, one should move to and live in an Owambo community. On the other hand they point out that moving into a new community where the language and culture is considerably different to a speakers home community, one would at first not know how to interact if the language of that community is unknown.

2.6 Conclusion

This chapter has given background to the various fields of interest in which my study is situated and on which I will draw in analysing the data collected in lectures at the HPC campus in Ongwediva. In the following chapter I shall describe the methodology that was used.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter looks at the research methodologies that were used in this project, which includes a description of how the researcher went about gathering information and data analysis. Since this research is qualitative, methods and approaches pertaining to a qualitative research methodology were used. I did a case study to observe particular uses of multiple languages in a higher education teaching context which would help to answer the research questions. According to Berg (2001: 238) a case study is a kind of research within the Social Anthropological Approach (SAA); Miles and Huberman (1994) identify this as one of three major approaches to qualitative data analysis. This approach gathers data from a single instance of possible a number of cases, and can investigate finer detail than a larger collection would allow. The researcher spends a considerable amount of time in a given community or with a given assortment of individuals in the field. The researcher also participates directly or indirectly with the study population during the gathering of data. The study worked with a sample that may in general terms be representative of classroom practices and that reflects the constitution of the participating groups of speakers across this particular campus. Even so, the study does not claim statistical representivity. As Wiley (2010: 20) has pointed out, “the information obtained from qualitative studies is not expressed in numerical terms, but rather in non-mathematical terms and concepts of social science”. Further, he draws attention to how qualitative research provides comprehensive descriptions of peoples’ experiences and can pay detailed attention to meanings they construct from interactions with other people and things in their environments. Similarly, Springer (2010: 109) states that qualitative research has “the ultimate goal of obtaining rich descriptions of peoples’ beliefs, behaviors, and experiences.” In addition to this, Miles & Huberman’s “SAA gives a picture into behavioural regularities of everyday life, language and language rituals and relations“ (Berg, 2001: 240)

3.2 Sampling techniques

In a study that works with a small number of participants, the researcher has to take a decision on the size of the sample. It is commonly accepted that sample sizes are smaller than they are in quantitative studies (Springer 2010:109).

The sampling method used in this study is characterised as “purposive sampling”. This is defined by Cousin (2011:79) as “recruiting people on the basis of a shared characteristic which will help in your inquiry”. In this particular study, all members of a third year class registered for the same course module were chosen as it was made up of students of different Namibian tribes as well as foreign ones, thus a variety of different first languages were represented in the group. For the interviews, six students were drawn from this class: two Oshiwambo L1, three Herero L1 and one Zemba L1 students.

Purposive sampling selects fewer participants so that the information, interpretation and analysis can be highly focused. A small number of people were included in this study. A total of five lectures of a third year module were observed and one lecturer participated. This group had 35 students in it. This enabled the researcher to elicit the language-and-learning related experiences of these participants on the ground. The researcher remains aware of the fact that this approach is limiting; interpretations were layered and care was taken in considering not to extrapolate the findings more widely than is justified.

3.3 Research design: case study

The case study approach that was used to gain insight into how students with varying, mutually unintelligible L1s interact in lectures and use their language repertoires in learning, involved the gathering of data in a Namibian higher education institution where multilingual students with different linguistic backgrounds are trained as upper primary school teachers. Different sources and methods (observation and interviews) were used within a specific setting – thus the “case” here is a section of a multilingual higher education community set in a rural area where speakers from a variety of different linguistic and cultural groups meet in the same learning and teaching space.

This approach was followed because it “offers the opportunity to investigate issues where they occur in a naturalistic setting and to produce descriptive and analytic accounts that invite readers’ judgment about their plausibility” (Cousin 2011:131). According to Cousin such qualitative data analysis will allow the researcher to explore themes, patterns, narratives, structure and language within different texts, (interview transcripts, field notes, documents, and visual meanings), though covering similar content, to generate a rich depiction of the research setting. Thus, the case study research systematically explores a setting in order to generate understandings about it.

In this particular study, the case study methodology allowed the researcher to focus on multilingual individuals who brought together in classroom interaction and with a related learning experience. The six participants who were selected for interviews, were drawn into this study on an assumption that they shared similar experiences as far as the issue of code switching and using more than one language in learning at HPC is concerned.

In selecting only six participants for the in-depth interviews, I followed McMillan & Schumacher (2001:322) who suggested that a case study which is descriptive or exploratory does not need as many persons as a self-contained study would have required.

3.4 Data collection methods

In order to answer the research questions, besides a general framework provided by literature on the central issues mentioned here, data was collected in the following ways:

First I did non-participant observation, video-recording two lectures of one third year module, where all students in this class count as participants. Second, I interviewed six students. These were not open-ended interviews; they were structured according to an interview schedule intended to elicit “little narratives” (De Fina, 2009: 234). The information given to participants as well as the request of their consent to use take part, is attached as Appendix C. Appendix D outlines the interview schedule. Interviewees were asked to give an overview of their linguistic profiles and educational experiences related to language(s) they know as well as languages of

As has been mentioned, the data was collected via non-participant observation, questionnaires for meta-data, video-recording of two lectures and structured interviews. Questionnaires were used to elicit biographical information as well as the languages participants know and use in various contexts. The interviews between the researcher and the students took place in the researcher’s classroom whereas the one with the lecturer took place in the campus boardroom. The spaces provided freedom to discuss matters without being inhibited by other listeners, and were sufficiently private. The interviews lasted for ± 15 minutes each. The whole data collection process was done this way: first recording lectures, then having questionnaires filled in, and finally the interviews – observation was done during the lectures, first simply by sitting in, and then also as they were recorded. After having observed three lectures, the researcher video-recorded two lectures of a particular third year class. Further observation was done during interviews. Besides the prepared questions in the

interviews, follow up questions were posed to the participants upon their various responses. Through these interviews “little narratives” were derived from the participants.

Four of the participants who took part in the interviews were selected on the basis that they were non-Oshiwambo L1 speakers, i.e. those identified in the data transcripts as P2, P3, P5 and P6. They were specifically selected to gain insight into the experiences of “outsiders” who represent mobile, multilingual students. P1 and P4 are Oshiwambo L1 speakers who were selected to represent this local L1 group who form the majority of students at HPC.

When the research started out, prior to the observation, the researcher got permission from the college authorities as well as the lecturer to observe lectures before she would video-record them. The observation took six hours on separate days; in all, three lectures were observed and each lecture lasted for two hours. Students were informed beforehand and they gave their consent for the researcher to sit in and observe their class. The researcher wished to observe the kind of linguistic interaction that went on during the lectures, that is, to observe which languages those students speak to and with other students and which ones students use communicating with the lecturer. Non-participant observation was done to get a naturalistic picture of what really goes on during the lectures.

3.5 Research instruments

3.5.1 Observation

The researcher attended five lectures in all, three in advance of recording, and then also the two recorded lectures. This was done with a view to getting firsthand information on how the lecturer and students interacted in the class: while the lecturer was presenting a given section of the curriculum, students were listening, taking notes, responding to questions, talking to one another, and so on. All the different aspects of classroom interaction were followed as pointers to the ways in which various languages that form part of the full classroom repertoire, are used or ignored and neglected. These observations and recordings were required as a framework against which the six interviews would be conducted.

The researcher took the role of a non-participant observer. As soon as the lecturer concerned gave consent to have the module recorded, the researcher began with the observation. During the first three lectures field notes were taken. This was done with the intention that students would be used to the researcher’s presence so it would not come as a surprise when the

researcher started recording – thus to assure that there was minimal behavioural change on account of the lecture being observed and recorded. Recording allowed the researcher to look repeatedly at finer detail that could be missed in a once-off observation. Recording on the very first visit to the class could cause both lecturer and students to behave in the way they think would be appropriate for an outsider, rather than just continuing naturally. This is a challenge linguistic researchers face, which has been termed the “observer’s paradox” (see Labov 1972: 209), meaning that it is difficult to be sure about the way that people use language when they are not being systematically observed. The researcher aims to get a realistic picture of patterns of language use without it being affected by his/her presence. In addition to this, there is the “Hawthorne effect”, to which Broches (2008: 4) refers in warning that the knowledge of being in an experiment may have a more powerful impact on participants’ behaviour than any single experimental variable. So, one has to be aware that the participants may adjust how they behave when they realize that they are being observed.

According to Springer (2010), “passive” observation (also known as non-participant observation) occurs when the researcher does not interact with the participants that he/she is observing. This was done discreetly during my observations in an attempt not to disturb anyone. Springer (2010: 389) points out (as Broches mentioned above) that participants may alter their behaviour when observed, even if they are not interacting with the person who is observing them. So an element of performing for the observer invariably exists when this method is utilized, and the interpretation of the data has to account for this possibility. The recording camera could not be left in the classroom without the researcher being present because in any case it needed somebody to operate it, and it was beneficial for the researcher to be in the class to observe aspects of the lecture that even a recording does not capture.

3.5.2 Video recording

The researcher got technical assistance for video recording before the two classes concerned. This was done so that data obtained from the earlier observations could be verified and remain available for more detailed analysis after the actual event. The researcher did the video recording herself. The camera was kept moving to capture different groups of students as well as to include the six students who would later be interviewed, and to go closer to the speakers while other students and the lecturer were speaking.

3.5.3 Interviews

The six interviewees will be referred to here as P1 (Katzao), P2 (Tuyeni), P3 (Tuhafeni), P4 (Ndapewa), P5 (Angula) and P6 (Kapandu) as well as LCTR1 (Ms Mbenzi⁶, the lecturer). All of these interviews were audio-recorded. The interviews took place on a one-on-one basis between the researcher and each of the students and the lecturer. This was to enable each participant to give their individual accounts freely without being affected by the response of their peers or the presence of their lecturer. The recordings of these interviews were then transcribed.

The interview method was used with the intention of obtaining their perspectives in narrative form from the participants. They related how their particular linguistic repertoires had developed from their early years. The researcher is aware that memory politics play a role in oral interviews. Many critiques of oral history sensitise us to the relative positionality of oral sources, because people will have different accounts and will try to give their specific views and selective accounts regarding what they know (see Thompson 2000; Perks and Thomson 1998).

According to De Fina (2009: 33), narratives told in interviews have become a central tool of data collection and analysis in a variety of disciplines within the social sciences. They are however criticized by some researchers (cf Schegloff 1997 and Goodwin 1997), who regard prompted narratives as artificial, in contrast to naturally occurring stories, which they see as much richer and more interesting sources of data and analysis (De Fina, 2009:233). Thus, as far as interviews are concerned, “the spoken or written word has always had forms of ambiguity, no matter how carefully the word, the questions and how carefully we code and report the answers” (Fontana and Frey in Cousin 2011:73). Nevertheless, the construction of individual memories as well as making reference to languages used in learning always employs different types of understanding of the truth, each with different claims to the truth and authenticity. Edward (1997: 337) states that interview data can be rich and provides many of the elements and moves that make up discursive life.

Walford, cited in Cousin (2011:37) suggests that one needs to listen to taped interviews several times and take notes as well as in capturing data verbatim. It is argued that semi-structured interviews are useful (as it is the case in this study), because they allow researchers to develop an in-depth account of experiences and perceptions with individuals, by collecting

⁶ All names of participants are fictive. The 6 who were interviewed have been coded for easy reference and recognition, but where a more personal identification seemed appropriate, I have used their pseudonyms.

and transcribing the interview talk with the researcher. This can produce empirical data about the lives and perceptions of individuals. After transcription one has a chance of revisiting interview data not clearly understood several times.

The interview schedule was drawn up in such a way that the questions posed to the interviewees could bring out “little narratives” about the participants’ language histories, the reasons why they opted to come and study at HPC, the language(s) used in learning, and the explanations people give for speaking Oshiwambo in a class where the language of instruction and learning is English. Follow-up questions were asked for clarity. Similar questions were posed to various participants so that the researcher could compare the responses and experiences of these different participants. Below are the interview questions put to the students and the lecturer:

1. What is your mother tongue, which other languages do you know, where and how did you learn them?
2. Which language(s) do you use in learning?
3. Why did you opt to come and study at HPC?
4. Does code switching occur in your classes and how does it affect you?

As for the lecturer (LCTR1), the questions were adjusted for her – such as in asking which language(s) she used in teaching, and what kind of code switching she encountered in teaching.

3.6 Data analysis

The data obtained in this study was analysed in the following manner. Firstly, the classroom recordings and field notes on these interactions were analysed to check communicative patterns, specifically to note whether more languages than only English were used, and if so what kind of functions each language fulfilled. Secondly, interview data was orthographically transcribed to enable a detailed analysis of these contributions. On the one hand this data informs on what languages the students know, and on the other hand it gives insight into how the various languages are used in their learning of specific academic content. Narrative analysis was employed as a means of understanding the journey of each individual in the process of becoming proficient in English as well as in languages other than their first languages. This approach to analysing interview data allows the researcher to hear how the narrators construct their stories as much as hearing what they have said in terms of content. According to Cousin (2011: 93),

narrative inquiry is particularly useful if you want to know something about how people make sense of their lives through the selective stories they feel are noteworthy episodes.

3.7 Ethical considerations

Before this study commenced, the researcher obtained permission to conduct the research at the two respective educational institutions, which are the Hifikepunye Pohamba Campus management and the University of Stellenbosch Sub-committee A Research Ethics Committee. Informed consent was obtained from all the participants, students as well as the lecturer whose class was observed and recorded, by explaining the purpose of the research and its uses. A copy of the request for permission that was granted by Stellenbosch University is attached at the end in Appendix A. Appendix B gives the letter of consent issued by HPC. In this case the students in the class whose module was observed as well as videotaped were all informed about the nature of the study and what its general interest is. The form on which they gave their consent to participate in this study, is copied as Appendix C.

3.8 Conclusion

This chapter has described the methods of selecting participants, collecting data and how analysis would proceed. In chapter 4 the analysis of the data will be presented.

CHAPTER FOUR

DESCRIPTION AND ANALYSIS OF DATA

4.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I will present the data which is made up of four overlapping kinds, namely observation, questionnaire forms, a small number of video-recorded lectures and the interview data. I will give a description of communicative practices in a multilingual classroom at HPC. This will include the documentation of how CS between Oshiwambo and English is used in facilitating learning of some in the classroom discourse, while it most likely excludes and alienates others. This chapter further will shed light on the kind of mobility that brings about linguistic diversity in a community traditionally seen as one where Owambo is not only dominant, but also has “ownership rights”. It will show how mobility has encouraged the use of English as MoI, and how such a use of English enables mobility. The findings will be presented according to the particular research questions as they were articulated in section 1.3 above.

4.2 Communicative practices observed in a multilingual higher education classroom

4.2.1 General communicative practices

Most classrooms at the campus are heterogeneous in that they are comprised of students from different backgrounds, different language communities, different nationalities and different tribes. The majority however, are Oshiwambo students who hail from the four “O-regions” of this country, namely Oshana, Ohangwena, Oshikoto and Omusati. Most inhabitants of these regions are Oshiwambo L1 speakers. A small number of students would come from the Opuwo, Caprivi or Karasburg regions and therefore will be L1 speakers of other Namibian languages, such as Otjiherero, Silozi, and Damara/Nama. There are also a few students from neighbouring countries such as Zimbabwe. In these classrooms, lecturers address students in the official language of instruction, English. Students’ attention and participation in the lessons are ensured by means of the regular teaching practice of asking questions. Students are also required to discuss issues pertaining to what they are being taught in a particular lecture and then to give feedback to the whole class at the end of the discussion of the given topics.

From my observation of the third year class it was evident that students engaged in conversations in more than just the MoI, English; in fact, a number of different languages

were used. This observation is important to this study because it answers the question of which languages are used in classroom discourse that occurs at HPC. During the lessons it was observed that students often communicate in Oshiwambo when borrowing items from each other, and in some in cases, when they did not want L1 speakers of other languages to overhear their discussion.

An example of where students switched to Oshiwambo when borrowing follows here:

- 6 a. "Can I borrow your pencil?"
- 6 b. "*Shike?*" (= "What?")
- 6 a. "*Opencila yoye*" (= "Your pencil")

Here the first student asked to borrow a pencil in English but her classmate, instead of using English, answered in Oshiwambo. The first student then also switched languages, translating her question into Oshiwambo.

It was also observed that when students are unsure as to what to say when speaking in English, they quickly switch to Oshiwambo. The following example illustrates this:

- 7. "You see this man in this picture, *shamha we mu tala ngaha oku li po* upside down. *Noho nge we mu tala vali ngaha oto mono epicture li ile.*"
 ["You see this man in this picture, *if you look at him this way you will see him facing upside down and if you look at him this way you will also see a completely different picture*".]

The switch to Oshiwambo was apparently done because the speaker could express this more precisely in her L1. Thus, the code switching is done to make up for limited skills in the language of the classroom that they are supposed to communicate in.

Students were asked to study a picture which depicts two different faces but they could only be made out if one studied it from different angles. They were asked to check whether they could make out the same thing. This was meant to bring home to them that people perceive the same things differently. A student in one of the groups communicated with her fellow student regarding the same picture, in Oshiwambo:

- 8. "*Ou wete, okaana hano oka thanekwa moosha, omusamane okwa thanekwa nge... Paife ngeyi owu wete shike?*"
 [This child's picture is taken from the side, whereas the man's this way...
 What do you see now?]

Other groups that had the Herero L1 students in them, discussed this in English and no Oshiwambo was heard in these groups.

The researcher also observed an instance whereby students reacted in Oshiwambo to something the lecturer had said in English:

9. “*Otu shi shi nale!*”
[“We already know that”.]

It seemed as if students felt that the content that was being passed on to them was already known and they used a language other than the official language of the classroom to let the lecturer know that it need not be repeated.

One interesting observation was that the Otjiherero speaking students did not sit together in the same groups, thus they did not code switch from English to Otjiherero or vice versa. It is unknown to the researcher why this happened.

4.2.2 Code switching as a communicative practice

It was observed that different students engage in different communicative practices during classroom interaction. One such practice happened when students sometimes uttered words or phrases in Oshiwambo while speaking English or vice versa. (See definitions of code switching in section 1.8 above)

Students were found to code switch mainly when answering lecturers or when they are communicating amongst themselves. In the following instances, when the communication in the class was largely in English, students had to assign roles to each other for class exercises to be done in their groups and then made arrangements informally in Oshiwambo.

10. “*Olye ta shanga nee?*” [“Who is going to be the secretary then?”]
11. “*Ngwee ongwee to shanga*”. [“You are the secretary”.]
12. “*Ngwee iilonga yoye oya shike ano?*” [“What exactly is your role?”]

During group discussion, Oshiwambo L1 students carried on with their discussion in Oshiwambo in the presence of other students who are L1 speakers of other languages and are often not fluent in Oshiwambo. One of these students requested others to “please speak English”.

It seems that students who know Oshiwambo (as L1 or as strong L2) were privileged in the classroom discourse when there is code switching to Oshiwambo because they are able to follow better than the others. In such instances the non-Oshiwambo speakers tend to be excluded from participation in classroom discourse because they do not understand whole sentences, words or phrases uttered in Oshiwambo. The request by Ms Magwati⁷, the Zimbabwean student, who does not understand Oshiwambo, for others to speak English was a clear indication that this student really felt left out and disadvantaged. She had not been able to follow the ideas shared in Oshiwambo by the Oshiwambo speakers, because her L1 is Shona and she has only recently been introduced to local Namibian languages. This means that she is less able to take part in the established “translanguaging practices” (see Garcia 2009, discussed in section 2.3.1.2 above).

In a different instance, Otjiherero L1 students were grouped with Oshiwambo L1 students but in this case they communicated in English, thus accommodating everyone in the group. It was observed that the Otjiherero L1 speakers in those groups took the lead in discussing whatever the groups needed to discuss in English, thus leaving no room for Oshiwambo speakers to commence the discussions in Oshiwambo.

Code switching happens in these classes on this campus, as per my observation. The following example of a student’s dialogue in a classroom discussion adds justification to this statement:

13. “I don’t know *kutya efano otali dimbulukifa nge shike*. Have you seen it before?”

[“I don’t know what this picture reminds me of. Have you seen it before?”]

The prevalent languages involved in code switching are English and Oshiwambo. Those students whose competence in English was relatively low tended to express themselves in Oshiwambo rather than in English. Students who have other L1s than Oshiwambo, mostly used English although, surprisingly, if two L1 speakers of Otjiherero were together in such a class they interacted in English. This distinguished them from the Oshiwambo L1 students, who under such circumstances would switch to Oshiwambo.

During the interview, the lecturer, Ms Mbenzi (LCTR1), confirmed that she also engages in code switching, as stated below:

⁷ Fictive name.

14. “I use English as the medium of instruction and when the need arises I might code switch but I also have to consider others like Caprivians, Hereros (Himbos) and then not use Oshiwambo to ask about some concepts or something that I want students to understand in their own contexts. I could code switch but I would make sure that I make meaning of it and also ask other students if they also have a specific meaning in their own languages.”

In 14. Ms Mbenzi (LCTR1) explains why she uses mostly English, even while she is aware of how code switching could help students who know L1 or even L2 Oshiwambo. Even though she is not proficient in other languages than Oshiwambo and English, she can accommodate the other students, either by using Oshiwambo which some understand as an L2 (especially the Hereros and Himbas), or by asking them to give the words for the relevant concepts in their own L1.

4.3 Linguistic diversity accommodated or denied in a multilingual HE classroom

The HPC community is a multilingual one as has been stated before. This section will discuss how this linguistic diversity is accommodated or denied in this Educational Theory and Practice (ETP) module, in the multilingual higher education classroom where data was collected.

4.3.1 Linguistic repertoires of the participants

Both the questionnaire and the oral interviews helped the researcher to gain an understanding of the linguistic repertoires of participants. This section will look at findings that help to answer the second research question regarding the usage of various languages in learning. Specifically it will pay attention to how speakers of different first languages refer to their experiences in a setting where both English and Oshiwambo are used in the classroom interaction.

The third year ETP class is made up of 36 students. The majority of these students are Oshiwambo speakers: 30 students are Oshiwambo L1 speakers, whereas 6 of them are L1 speakers of other languages who have either limited or no proficiency in Oshiwambo. Other languages represented in this class are those of the Herero, Zemba and Shona, namely four Otjiherero L1 speakers (P2, P5 and P6) in the class, one Zemba L1 speaker (P3) and one Zimbabwean student who is a Shona L1 speaker.

All of these 36 students are bilingual, meaning that they speak at least two languages, either Oshiwambo and English, or Otjiherero/Zemba/Shona and English. Only a few students are multilingual in that they speak an additional language such as Afrikaans or Portuguese in addition to the others that they know and speak. Further, amongst the Oshiwambo L1 students, some can speak more than one dialect of Oshiwambo, for instance Oshikwanyama and Oshindonga, or Oshindonga and Oshikwambi. It should be noted that Oshikwanyama and Oshindonga are the only two dialects of Oshiwambo which are officially orthographically represented in Namibia. Oshikwambi, although recognised as a spoken dialect, does not have a written representation.

Ms Magwati (the Zimbabwean student, who was not one of the interviewees) speaks Shona, one of the national languages of Zimbabwe, as her L1. Since she was the only Zimbabwean student in this class, her mother tongue did not form part of this classroom discourse as she had no one to speak it with. She spoke only English in class. For such a student English is the key to taking part in educational discourse on this campus.

Katzao (P1) speaks two languages, namely English and Oshiwambo. She uses them daily because she is specialising in languages (English and Oshindonga) for educational purposes. She admitted to code switching to Oshiwambo in classes whose medium of instruction is English when speaking to other Oshiwambo speakers, even if in 10. below she testifies to using mostly English.

15. "I speak English mostly in ETP class whenever I have to answer a question or to express myself, and I use English without mixing it with other languages because in this class we are mixed from major classes."

The same thing happens in the Arts class too. Katzao (P1) speaks other languages such as Afrikaans and Portuguese, though not as well as English.

Tuyeni (P2) speaks two languages besides her mother tongue which is Otjiherero, namely English and Afrikaans, which are the languages she learned at school. For her Otjiherero and Afrikaans rarely form part of the classroom discourse; she hardly ever has an opportunity to speak them.

16. "I mostly use English but my friends speak Oshiwambo. I use Oshiwambo with my friends during classroom discussions but I use English to report back to class."

Tuhafeni (P3), on the other hand, is from the Namibian Zemba community and his mother tongue is Otjizemba. He can also speak Otjiherero, English and Oshiwambo. He speaks Oshiwambo well since he learned it at school, as a school subject as from grade 1. He mostly speaks English during classes although in some classes such as Arts, students have opportunities to give examples in their own languages and also to check whether there are similarities between how things are referred to in different languages.

17. “I speak Zemba mostly as my mother tongue and a bit of Otjiherero. It was easy for me to learn the language, not like other languages.”

Ndapewa (P4) speaks his mother tongue Oshiwambo in addition to Afrikaans and English. For him this is what he says about languages used in the classroom:

18. “I use both Oshindonga and English during classroom interaction because I find it easy to learn in my mother tongue and I later translate what I have learned to English”.

He further stated that he uses English more during class time and uses Oshiwambo mostly when socialising with his friends.

Angula (P5) is an Otjiherero L1 speaker. The only other language she speaks is English, a language that mostly dominates her classroom discourse.

19. “I speak English throughout, in the class and even around here and around Ongwediva.”

Kapandu (P6) speaks Otjiherero, which is his mother tongue. In the classroom, he uses English unless he is instructed by lecturers to refer to his own language, especially during the Arts class. When he is grouped with Oshiwambo speakers, they all communicate in English because he does not really understand enough Oshiwambo to be accommodated. He learned a bit of Oshiwambo as an adult when he came to study at HPC.

20. “The first year I came here all the people were just speaking Oshiwambo and it was hard for me, but now I am comfortable with it, but only understand it but can’t write it. So you understand them but you cannot answer them back in Oshiwambo. It was only the greetings that I could answer them because they are very easy. In the Wambo culture they greet each other in return but us (Herero) do not. The more we learn together I can learn their language and they learn mine too.

Ms Mbenzi (LCTR1) is an Oshiwambo L1 speaker. She speaks a bit of Afrikaans, while the language she uses in her teaching, is English. Various languages form part of the discourse in this lecturer’s classroom in that she is willing to accommodate even those that she cannot

speak or understand. The dominant languages in classroom discourse are Oshiwambo, Otjiherero and English. Ms Mbenzi does not understand Otjiherero functionally, nor does she “support the use of other languages in class (thus she doesn’t encourage “tanslanguaging practices), students use them anyway, and this is tolerated.

21. “I speak Oshiwambo and English medium of instruction ... and a bit of Afrikaans.”

In the interview Ms Mbenzi reported that L1s like Otjiherero and Oshiwambo are used to make meaning for students if they have to discuss something in groups. In addition, it is felt that students express themselves freely and have more vocabulary in their mother tongues when explaining concepts or ideas to one another. So, it seems there is a contradiction between the overt policy of English-only, and what is happening *de facto*. This relates well to the findings of Banda (2007) on the use of isiXhosa in learning at UWC.

English is used by students in most cases to accommodate the non-Oshiwambo speakers. However, in smaller groups that are completely made up of Oshiwambo speakers, students prefer to conduct the group discussion in Oshiwambo. Another assertion of the lecturer is that students follow well when ideas are presented to them in their own mother tongues, especially when it is done by their fellow students.

4.3.2 Linguistic biographies of the participants

This section will examine the linguistic biographies of the participants to find out and report on which languages they speak in different contexts. Further, interview data will reveal some information regarding how English-Oshiwambo code switching influences the learning of these participants. This provides insight into the language histories and repertoires of the students, as well as the languages that they choose for communication within and outside the classroom. This is important to this study because knowing what the participants’ biographies are would inform the researcher regarding language learning at this higher education teacher training campus.

4.3.2.1 Impact of English-Oshiwambo code switching on students learning experience

Some students learnt Oshiwambo at a relatively late stage, i.e. after secondary school when they started at HPC, because they needed to understand what other students were saying. They found that most local students just communicate in their vernaculars, and that as

outsiders they needed to accommodate towards the dominant community language. This is a widely reported phenomenon that those who have moved to a new environment form a minority, and so they feel obliged to learn the dominant community language. The following gives the relevant information the researcher derived from the interview data.

Katzao (P1) states that:

22. “In my Maths class, our lecturer allows us to express whatever we are discussing in Oshiwambo if we fail to do so in English. For example, when we are dealing with sums...”.

Tuyeni (P2, who is an L1 Otjiherero L1 speaker) states it as follows:

23. “It was not easy learning to speak Oshiwambo because I first started learning bad words (things) before I came to the ones that made sense. It took me a year to learn a whole clear sentence in Oshiwambo. Now I feel comfortable when speaking Oshiwambo. English is so formal while Oshiwambo is so friendly and it makes discussing and learning easier than carrying it out in English”.

After two years at HPC, Tuyeni (P2) experienced no hardships when her fellow students or teachers switched to Oshiwambo during discussions because she could understand what others were saying. In fact, she even reports (in 23.) that she finds the later learnt Oshiwambo L2 easier as a bridge to learning than English L2. She further states that:

24. “If I am with a group of people who don’t particularly like speaking English, I switch to Oshiwambo which is understood by everyone in order to accommodate all the students in the group”.

For Tuhafeni (P3), it was also not easy in the beginning to execute tasks in an environment largely dominated by Oshiwambo speakers because:

25. “In my first year when I got an assignment that I didn’t understand, I had to ask my colleagues, but didn’t know in which language. I was then forced to do my tasks alone and I didn’t manage very well”.

After a while, Tuhafeni (P3) found classroom discussions easier to follow as he got to learn the language that most of his classmates spoke, that is Oshiwambo. His learning was no longer affected by the feeling that he could not understand everything in code-switched class discussions.

Ndapewa (P4) confirmed a position that was noted by a number of students, namely that speaking English throughout without switching to other languages like Oshiwambo could be regarded as good training for student-teachers, as stated below:

26. “When we speak Oshiwambo we understand each other and we avoid others to think that we are showing off when we speak English. However, English is the medium of instruction, so as student teachers we need to learn because we are going to teach learners in English, except those who are specializing in Namibian languages. Most lecturers encourage us to carry out our discussions in English and only switch to Oshiwambo if there is something that is not easy to understand. People who discuss in English enhance their learning and they also gain new vocabulary and their knowledge will grow more than those who discuss in Oshiwambo”.

Angula (P5), an Otjiherero L1 speaker, narrated his experience this way:

27. “When I first came here, all I could hear, was just Oshiwambo, and it was hard for me especially during lectures. However, I am comfortable with this situation (now) because I can understand Oshiwambo, though I cannot write it. Luckily most of our lessons are taught in English. Otjiherero only comes in when we are asked to refer to our own languages”.

Kapandu (P6), an Oshiwambo L1 speaker, narrated her experience this way:

28. “I use English in my learning because it is the medium of instruction unless when I attend other subjects that are taught in Oshiwambo like Oshindonga Language Education. I use English in Educational Theory and Practice (ETP) class, whenever I have to answer a question or express myself, I use English without mixing with other languages.”

From the participants’ responses, it is clear that some students feel at ease using both languages, namely the official MoI and Oshiwambo, in their learning. For some, they had to get used to hearing their fellow students interacting in Oshiwambo. Although the language of instruction is English, they reported that the classroom was in a certain sense bilingual. This was not easy for those who are not proficient in Oshiwambo because they felt they had no support from their fellow students regarding school work. This type of code switching hindered some students’ effective learning due to the usage of Oshiwambo in a learning environment that was supposed to be dominated by English, the official MoI.

4.3.2.2 Histories of languages learnt

The participants in this study have learnt to speak other languages than their L1 for various reasons. Many already acquired L2s such as English and Afrikaans during their primary and

secondary schooling. Others have learnt new languages informally at HPC, and some they report having learnt at other places.

For Katzao (P1), this is how she narrated the process of her learning English:

29. “For me it depended on the environment and the background where I started my grade 1. I was not really taught in English. In the upper grades, even though I was not good in English, I could understand some things that are said in English.”

This student, Tuyeni (P2), learnt her mother tongue and two additional languages at school:

30. “I learned Otjiherero when I was very young as my first language, but from Grade 5 I started learning English and Afrikaans”.

Tuyeni (P2) also had to learn Oshiwambo in order to understand her fellow classmates here at this campus. It was done informally because it was not given in the classroom setting.

31. “I now use Oshiwambo here because I hardly ever speak English and other languages outside of class; it is only Oshiwambo now that I speak, and Oshiwambo has become a part of me now, so it is now my second language after Otjiherero.”

Tuhafeni (P3) acquired Otjizemba from an early age as his mother tongue and also learnt a bit of Otjiherero. At school he learnt English.

Ndapewa (P4) acquired Oshiwambo, his mother tongue from an early age. In his early teenage years, his parents relocated to the coast (Arandis) where he acquired Afrikaans, and improved his English.

Angula (P5) acquired Otjiherero from an early age, and indicates that he learnt additional languages when he moved to HPC. He was exposed to Oshiwambo for the first time as an adult as it is the main mode of informal communication at this campus.

Kapandu (P6) speaks two dialects of Oshiwambo, namely Oshindonga and Oshikwanyama. This is due to the fact that at home she and her family speak Oshikwanyama and at school she learnt Oshindonga. She speaks a bit of Afrikaans and Portuguese which she has learnt from her friends.

Ms Mbenzi (LCTR1) speaks Oshiwambo, English and a bit of Afrikaans. She has acquired Oshiwambo from her parents and peers as she was growing up. Other languages were taught as school subjects and used during her University training.

It is notable that in asking participants to report on their own multilingualism and linguistic repertoire, that they all still work with what is called a “monolingual model”, or “double monolingualism” in Dufva et al.’s (2011) terms. The variety of languages they know and use are referred to as distinct systems; no attention goes to the way in which the various systems collaborate and all co-determine the speaker’s identity. There were hardly any signs of awareness that students and lecturers are simultaneously using a variety of ‘voices’ and that, as Mick (2011) pointed out, it is possible to integrate different languages and the ways of articulating that each represents in the classroom discourse. Also almost completely absent in the references to linguistic repertoires and the functions of various languages, dialects and genres, is the view put forward by Canagarajah (2007) that multilingual contexts show a great deal of fluidity so that fixed boundaries only rarely materialise. Even with much reliance on languages other than English, some deny code switching, or (often indirectly) admit to the view that using languages other than English is a limitation to good quality teaching and learning.

4.3.2.3 Languages spoken outside the classroom

The information that is presented here is derived from the questionnaires that the participants responded to, and from the interviews. It helps to shed some light on the linguistic diversity of this HPC community.

Some participants of this study have indicated that they use different languages in various contexts. The patterns of use outside of formal education are different to those that they use in the classroom. For others, like Katzao (P1) whose L1 is the dominant community language, more languages come into play simply by her knowing how people greet or say “thank you” in another language such as Otjiherero or Shona. She speaks a bit of Afrikaans and Portuguese with her friends, though not necessarily with friends who are in the same class.

Tuyeni (P2) uses Oshiwambo, a language she has come to learn at HPC, because it is the dominant language here. She maintains that

31. “Everywhere you go, either to shops or wherever, people are just speaking Oshiwambo, and some do not even understand English, so I had to adjust to people here”.

In some instances she uses a mixed code, especially with her colleagues and peers. During religious ceremonies, she uses Otjiherero, her mother tongue.

Tuhafeni (P3) uses both Oshiwambo and English with his fellow students. He reported also using English to interact with his peers outside school. He indicated that he uses a mixed code both in the classroom as well as with colleagues. Otjizemba, his L1, is mostly used in the religious context.

Ndapewa (P4) similarly reported using Oshiwambo at church because the scriptures are translated into Oshiwambo, so that the language is widely used in their religious gatherings. He also uses this language when he is socializing with his friends. English is used in the school grounds, with fellow students as well as with peers outside of school.

Angula (P5) uses a mixed code in the classroom, with fellow students as well as with peers outside school. English is used in the school grounds. Otjiherero is used in religious context.

Kapandu (P6) uses English in the contexts of classroom, school grounds and religion. A mixed code is used with fellow students as well as with peers outside school.

Ms Mbenzi (LCTR1) uses English in the classroom and with some colleagues. Oshiwambo is used in the school grounds, with colleagues and with peers outside school; it is also the language she uses at home and with her family. A mixed code of English and Oshiwambo is often used on the school grounds.

The participants' responses show that HPC is quite a diverse community in terms of different languages that are represented and used here. Different students and teachers use different codes in different contexts. Some have indicated that a mixed code is used during social interaction, but also in lectures. Students do actually code switch often, and most are aware of this practice as a regular part of communication at HPC. Even when they are aware of regular code switching, they do not show reflective awareness that goes beyond pragmatic considerations. For example, issues of purity versus hybridity of languages, different genres governed by situationally bound norms, or the differences between formal and informal language learning, are not part of an active discourse in the educational setting. (see Kamwangamalu (1989), Canagarajah (2007))

4.4 Multilingualism and mobility in a Namibian HE classroom

This section is informed by the researcher's observations as well as the interview data. These kinds of data are important to this study because it answers the research question on mobility, language and learning in a higher education teacher training institution.

Tuyeni (P2) said this regarding the reasons why she found herself in Ongwediva, specifically at HPC:

32. "For me Ongwediva was the nearest institution to where I come from. I couldn't go to Windhoek because it is far, but I am coping here in Ongwediva and I like the place. I had to adjust to the new environment, new people and languages but I am fine with everything now. I can speak and write Oshiwambo".

In the case of Tuhafeni (P3), he only learned to speak English when he moved to Ruacana after leaving his home village located in the Opuwo region. This is what he had to say regarding his mobility:

33. "The foundation of English in my primary school was not good but when I came to Ruacana it got better and I got to know so many things. I was exposed to lots of things and I started to learn English from my peers".

Ndapewa (P4) also had to learn new languages to fit in with the community in which he found himself as his family travelled. During his teenage years he moved to the south of the country, the coast to be specific, and was forced to learn Afrikaans which is a lingua franca in Arandis. However, he continued to speak Oshiwambo at home, and English at school. He was confronted with English as MoI when he started his higher education, therefore for him learning through medium of English and communicating with lectures and students in English, is a late development.

The twenty first century is characterised already by heightened mobility of people. This is enabled and explained by quite a number of reasons. This is true even in the relatively remote, underpopulated northern part of Namibia. Students who are non-Oshiwambo speakers have moved to Ongwediva in order to get training as future educators. Their choices to come to HPC are motivated by the fact that they want better life chances which they wouldn't otherwise have found should they have stayed in their areas of origin. In moving to a new town and educational institution, these students encounter codes which are new to

them and in order to interact, although not always with high proficiency, some students acquire these new codes.

Most of the students at HPC have moved from elsewhere within the country, meaning that they simply moved from one region of Namibia to another, for example from Opuwo to Oshana where HPC is located. There are no similar educational opportunities in their own communities, therefore they came to study at HPC.

In the class group where my data was collected, only one student has crossed national borders, namely from Zimbabwe to Namibia. The reason for her choosing to attend this college was that her spouse got better employment in Namibia than he could find back home, and she felt she had to further her studies. Thus she chose to train as a teacher at HPC. It is likely that there are comparable educational opportunities in their home country, but in the current economic dispensation probably less job opportunities - that is why the spouse is working in Namibia.

The world has become an international village, meaning that people are enabled to move more easily from one place to another. As a result of this increased mobility people are confronted with a variety of different languages and have to find a way of also becoming “communicatively mobile”. In other words, they cannot get by knowing only the one language that may be dominant in their home communities. Then in southern Africa, due to a British colonial past in the larger part of the region, they rely heavily on English as a lingua franca, that is, on the language that is widely used in education as well as in other public domains to communicate across cultures. In the case of some students at HPC, they were confronted with a local community language they have not learnt before, namely Oshiwambo. Knowing English as a language of learning enables people to choose between a variety of educational institutions. In order to be communicatively integrated in this particular region most of these student teachers have acquired a little bit of Oshiwambo. Some have even indicated that in the country Oshiwambo has greater importance than their own mother tongues.

Different reasons are given for people moving to this particular campus. The most important reason why students with L1s other than Oshiwambo choose to come to HPC is their wanting better life chances through getting an education. Thus most are here by choice because they come and study at HPC rather than at other UNAM campuses that are located all over the

country. The non-Oshiwambo speakers in this study all confirm that being equipped with English only as the lingua franca either in the classroom or in the community at large, was inadequate as far as communication is concerned.

A number of participants know and speak Afrikaans. However, Afrikaans does not really play a big role at this campus. This is interesting, because previously it was a language that gave access to many opportunities in Namibia. A number of reasons are given for the lesser status of Afrikaans currently. Firstly, Afrikaans is no longer an MoI as it used to be during the time this country was a South African “protectorate”. The country was intended to be temporarily governed after being detached from German colonial rule at the end of World War I. According to Brock-utne (1997:242) the South African colonization, which was supposed to be a Trusteeship, lasted from 1946 until 1990. In this period, Afrikaans became the language of instruction from grade 4 upwards. After independence, the new government opted for English to replace Afrikaans as the language of instruction. People who studied prior to independence are still articulate in Afrikaans, because their studies were done mainly in Afrikaans.

Secondly, only a minority of people (lecturers, administrative staff as well as students - including a few participants in this study) at HPC know Afrikaans. These are people who lived in the south of the country in regions like Khomas, Erongo, Karas and Hardap. Afrikaans is mostly the L2 that they learned at school, and it is a lingua franca for many of them. The few mentioned here tend to interact with each other in Afrikaans rather than in English, especially in informal settings. It was observed that lecturers tend to interact with students who can speak Afrikaans in this language, instead of using English. This was particularly observed outside of classrooms. Further, the same is happening in the local community: those who know and speak Afrikaans communicate in this language. My untested impression is that there is a growing Afrikaner community residing around the HPC, otherwise the lingua franca is Oshiwambo and English.

4.5 Conclusion

The data from the observation, interviews as well as from video-recoding of lectures informed this study, giving evidence of several communicative practices in multilingual classes at HPC. The use of Oshiwambo, English or a mixed code is standard practice. The dominance of Oshiwambo as community language seems to disadvantage students who are

not L1 speakers of Oshiwambo, while it advantages Oshiwambo L1 students. When Oshiwambo is used during interaction in a multilingual classroom, students who do not know it, find it hard to follow the discussions and thus are unable to contribute to whatever is being discussed. On the other hand, the ones who speak Oshiwambo, report that they benefit from the use of this language in the classroom because they hear the content in their mother tongues and so feel more certain of what they are learning. English is considered as a lingua franca at HPC. Speakers of languages other than Oshiwambo have found out that it is not sufficient to be in possession of their L1s and English only, because it lessens their chances of learning and taking part in all discourses. As a result, some of the mobile L1 speakers of languages such as Otjiherero, Otjizemba or Shona were ‘forced’ to learn a new language (Oshiwambo) in order to become communicatively integrated.

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

5.1 Introduction

The previous chapter presented data from observation and recording of lectures and from interviews. The findings from the data were presented and interpreted. This chapter will discuss these findings and conclude this study. A discussion of findings will be presented here first.

5.2 Discussion of findings

The findings indicate that there are similarities and differences in the linguistic practices of the various participants of this study. The similarities are these that they are all multilingual and the majority (who are Oshiwambo L1 students) tend to interact in their mother tongues during the group discussions, but they stick to English during classroom presentations and also when they give responses to lecturers. Students tap into their linguistic repertoires to enhance their learning, and that is done through the usage of their mother tongues, even when they have a minority language as their L1. However, this does not mean that English is done away with; both languages characterise the classroom discourses. The differences are that participants have different linguistic repertoires which are used differently in the learning context. The Oshiwambo speaking participants are both bilingual and multilingual, and have not learned a new language here at HPC. There are no English L1 students, and yet none demanded that English be discarded or replaced as the MoI. Minority language L1 speakers were unanimous in stating that English only was not enough in a context where the community language is as strong as Oshiwambo in this region.

Findings of this study have provided evidence that students alternate between two languages, Oshiwambo and English. Observed and recorded presentations by the lecturer are done in English and responses by students are also given in English. Only group discussions are characterized by both Oshiwambo and English. Switching to Oshiwambo is a result of students wanting to tap into their linguistic repertoires that are at their disposal, in order to boost their learning. Markedly, LTRC 1 did not code switch between English and Oshiwambo; she spoke only English during both recorded lectures. She adhered to the policy that the MoI is English. She mentioned her awareness of students who do not know Oshiwambo. However, she also mentioned that students do revert to their L1s and even at

times to other shared languages such as Afrikaans, and that she found such code switching to be a form of pedagogic support.

Regarding the types of code switching that were presented in this multilingual classroom, it was found that in many informal group discussions Oshiwambo is the matrix language for those students who code switch, whereas English serves as the embedded language. From time to time, when English is used in larger or mixed group discussions, the MoI is the matrix language, and Oshiwambo terms or short explanations will be embedded. Distinguishing clearly between matrix and embedded language in this context is another sign of a “double monolingualism” or “parallel monolingualisms” which does not fully capture the ways in which these multilinguals draw on all their linguistic resources, using new forms without aiming for native speaker competence (Dufva et al. 2011: 109ff.)

Some students are denied access to group discussions because others simply speak or code switch to Oshiwambo. Once discussions are over, points raised are presented in English. During the teacher’s presentation of lessons, students are limited to only one language, namely English. Others languages are occasionally used, but only in a few mentioned classes for example Arts, as it is shown in the interviews with students. During group discussions, students draw from their linguistic repertoires to share their arguments and ideas. Code switching serves to bring unity amongst the Oshiwambo speaking students, because Oshiwambo became a uniting tool as far as students’ understanding of content is concerned. It also served in explaining and clarifying subject matter (Adendorff 1993; Setati et. al 2002). Further, it assisted in interpreting content (Adendorff 1993). Lastly, it served to support classroom communication (Setati et. al 2002).

In the group where the Zimbabwean student sat, students were not accommodating towards her needs to also learn in the language she understood, which confirmed that inability to speak Oshiwambo was not well accommodated. Although English is the MoI, it was determined that other codes were used in this multilingual classroom. It was found that students who do not cope during group discussions if they stick to English, switch to Oshiwambo confident that the lecturer and most students will follow them. When students lack terminology in English, they immediately code switched to Oshiwambo. It is easier for students to switch to their mother tongues because they are the languages they know and they feel able to say exactly what they mean. English is regarded a language that can open doors for students as far as employment and study opportunities are concerned. Even so, in this multilingual classroom English takes a secondary position to Oshiwambo amongst the Oshiwambo speakers, especially during group

discussions. Conversations between students among themselves as well as with the lecturers take place in a mixed code.

The Otjiherero speaking students showed willingness to be exposed and to learn other languages in the new community, so they would move out of their comfort zone and utilised whatever measures they could to understand what other students say during group discussions. However no code switching from English to Otjiherero was witnessed in these lectures. This could be because the Otjiherero L1 students are a minority, but also because they did not team up in classroom discussion groups.

Linguistic mobility is served when the non-Oshiwambo students learn to speak Oshiwambo and it eventually becomes a code that they use to answer others during discussion. Further, having moved from one region to another, (e.g. from Opuwo to Oshana), these students' linguistic as well as their communicative resources have become mobile. In addition, their languages can be regarded as languages in motion because they have brought them along to HPC, thus these have become mobile. The educational context is already responding to such mobility as it does not deny access to students with languages other than English or Oshiwambo as their MoI or L1 respectively. It does however only limitedly assist in that the linguistic variety is acknowledged, but no special support for minority language speakers either in integrating or in learning the local languages, is provided.

5.3 Recommendations

- (i) Being multilingual should be seen as a valuable resource rather than as something that is forced onto people.
- (ii) Educators should be sensitised to this issue, and should understand how it affects students in their learning; they need training as to how to deal with multilingual students' needs.
- (iii) African languages such as Oshiwambo, Otjiherero and Setswana should also form part of the repertoire of languages acknowledged in tertiary education. Their use alongside English as MoI should be encouraged, and suitable ways of using both in verbal communication, as well as developing writing skills in two languages needs dedicated scholarly attention. This will lead to plurilingual competence,

meaning that students will learn and know different languages, for use in different though still closely related academic genres.

5.4 Conclusion

This study has disclosed that even with a single official MoI, the HPC is a bilingual education institution, in that at least two languages are used in teaching and learning. The code switching that takes place in the multilingual classroom observed and recorded at HPC is a form of accommodation rather than alienation. However, certain students experienced the use of Oshiwambo as a tool to alienate them because for them Oshiwambo was not accessible. Oshiwambo is dominant in this geographic area so it is more prevalent in classroom interactions than other indigenous African languages. Oshiwambo is often used, either as a fall-back option when students are stuck with English, or as a language which mediates in knowledge development. Nevertheless, English is given prestige value because it is the official language, the recognised MoI as well as a global lingua franca. Switching to a local language is used to transmit knowledge and to make meaning to those students who lack complete competence in English. For many, the environments where they grew up and were given primary and secondary education, has limited their development of English for academic purposes. Similarly, their first languages have not been well developed as languages of literacy.

I hope that the findings of this case study will serve to inform other educators, or lecturers at other campuses, of the practices of using more languages than only English in an environment where English is the preferred MoI and at the same time an L2 for the majority of students. We need to be alerted to the ways in which denial of the multilingual phenomena typically occurring in these contexts, may adversely affect students. We particularly need educators to be sensitive to the challenges facing students who are not from the same geographic area and who do not have the same linguistic repertoires as the rest of the community. It is highly likely that the University of Windhoek satellite campuses at Rundu or Katima Mulilo will have similar difficulties integrating students who are L1 speakers of other than the local languages, and that choosing an international lingua franca such as English does not overcome the demands of plurilingualism in such contexts.

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